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ABSTRACT

Targeted for children aged 5 through 12, this handbook contains some ideas for educational activities, a brief overview of the constitutional development period in U.S. history, and a simplified annotated outline of the Constitution. This material should prove helpful in teaching children the following: (1) the intrinsic values embedded in the Constitution; (2) the unique historical role it has played in providing both a philosophical ideal and a model for the states and other countries; (3) the language and structure of the document; (4) the role of each branch of government; (5) the rights and responsibilities an individual has under the Constitution; (6) the impact of the Constitution on the development of the United States through the years; and (7) the importance of the Constitution in current times and its influence on people's lives today. A list of useful resources for teaching about the Constitution concludes the document. (JB)

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Helping Children to Understand the United States Constitution

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PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH WORLD BOOK

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION • SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON YOUTH EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

Werner Wolff, Black Star

Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were adopted, stands in Independence National Historical Park in downtown Philadelphia.

This handbook is prepared as a part of the Youth Bicentennial Initiative of the American Bar Association's Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship (YEFC). It is one of several publications under this Initiative designed to promote interest and education in the United States Constitution. We hope that the publications and the programs of the Youth Bicentennial Initiative will leave a lasting legacy that will contribute to the improvement of citizenship education throughout the country.

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Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship

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Helping Children Understand The United States Constitution

Developed by Minna S. Novick

Helping Children Understand the United States Constitution is the first of two handbooks of activities and resources for teaching young people about the Constitution. This handbook is targeted toward children ages five through twelve; the second is for teenagers. Both are intended for use in communities and schools. Community youth leaders should find the ideas useful in helping young people explore their constitutional heritage. In schools these handbooks will help guide extracurricular activities or supplement courses of study.

In this handbook you will find some ideas for educational activities, a brief overview of the constitutional period in United States history, and a simplified annotated outline of the Constitution. Additionally, there is a listing of resources that can enhance and extend your activities with children.

As we began this project, we asked ourselves, "What are the key understandings that young people need to have about the Constitution of the United States?" We concluded that they need to know:

- some of the intrinsic values embedded in the Constitution,
- the unique historical role it has played in providing both a philosophical ideal and a model for the states and other countries,
- the language and structure of the document,
- the role of each branch of government,
- what rights and responsibilities an individual has under the Constitution,
- the impact of the Constitution on America's development through the years, and
- the importance of the Constitution in our time and its influence on our lives today.

These understandings do not come easily; however, young people can more readily take hold of them by:

- thinking about the ideas embodied in the Constitution as applied in concrete situations;
- meeting these ideas repeatedly over time in school, in the newspapers and media, and in their own lives; and
- discussing these ideas in a planned, sequential way with knowledgeable adults in the community (lawyers, judges, police officers, elected officials).

We hope that we have helped you in this important task.

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Rules, Rules, Rules

Focus on the Constitution

People can establish rules that help them to live together in peace and freedom.

The Setting

These initial activities help children to begin thinking about rules in the classroom or in a community group. Here they are asked to make a list of the rules governing their lives. These rules become the basis for their own constitution, which will be formally drawn up and signed later.

Children reflect on when and why rules are needed and what criteria can be used to judge the rules.

Getting Started

1. Begin by telling the children that you want them to play the Eraser Game. Divide the group into two straight lines and say something like: "Okay, everybody, let's play the Eraser Game." Don't say anything else. The children will probably look very confused and ask you — "How do you play it?" Lead them to see that they need to know the rules in order to play the game.

Working with the Ideas

1. Observe that to play games together people need rules and that to work and live together people also need to have rules.

2. Ask the children why people need rules in families, on playgrounds, on buses, in schools. List each child's response and review all to consolidate ideas. ***Be sure to put this list on a chart for later use.*** This listing can later serve as the basis for the preamble of the group constitution.

3. Remind the children of the Eraser Game that they started to play earlier. Tell them that you are going to give them time to play that game now and that you are going to give them some rules to use. Work with the children as they play the game. Give the rules; discuss issues that arise.

4. Refer to the criteria for a good rule that you have written on the board ("A rule should be easy to follow"). Tell the children that there are more ways you can tell a good rule and post "Tests for Good Rules" on a chart.

5. Ask the children to consider rules that would not pass these tests, such as: "Children coming in first from recess must be third in line and second to go to lunch while; children coming in last must be first in line and third to go to lunch." This rule is certainly not simply stated and understood and it would probably also be very difficult to enforce!

6. For a group that already has rules (written or unwritten), have the children begin by identifying and writing down these rules. Then list any other rules the children believe the group needs. The group will then have two sets of rules — "Rules We Have" and "Rules We Need."

7. For a group that has not established any rules, start them off by making and listing some on the chalkboard.

8. With younger children, talk over the rules together and write the rules on a chart for all to see.

9. Where children can write easily, pair them and have them work together to develop and write their rules. Then develop a master listing of rules drawn from each pair:

- select a pair of the children to tell one of their rules;
- write that rule on the chalkboard, in the children's own words;
- record the number of pairs that also have that rule on their lists.

Repeat the above procedure until all the rules that the students have identified are listed together. Note that this process will require sorting out the rules that are alike but are not stated the same and having the children agree upon the statement that is recorded on the master list. *Be sure to record all lists and transfer them to a chart for future use.*

10. Have children check to see if *each* rule they have identified passes the tests for a good rule above. Put a star beside each of their rules which does. Decide whether the rules that do not have a star (have not passed the tests) should be rewritten or eliminated. (Rewrite the rules together or assign rewriting projects and have the group consider reports later.)

11. Make a final chart of rules (with pictures to match) and post prominently on the wall. Give each child a copy to take home. Tell the group to discuss these rules with their friends and parents and come prepared to review them the next time the group meets.

This activity is based in part on material adapted from: *Rules, Rules, Rules*, developed by David T. Naylor, *et al.*, the Ohio State Bar Association, 1980; and from *Elementary Law-Related Education Source Guide*, grades 3-6, Cleveland Public Schools, 1981.

Tests for Good Rules

A rule should be easy to follow.

A rule should be simply stated.

A rule should include *only* activities we are able to perform.

A rule must be enforceable.

A rule must not go against another rule.

A rule should have a penalty for breaking it.

The Eraser Game

(Adapted from "The Buckle Game" designed by Harriet Bickleman Joseph.)

a. Tell the first person in each line to pass the eraser from the front to the back of the line. Tell the last person to bring the eraser up to the first person in the line.

b. After students begin to play, the teacher is to interrupt the game at intervals to give one of the following directions:

— Oh, you are to pass the eraser with your eyes closed.
— Oh, you must pass the eraser with your left hand.
— Oh, everyone should be on their knees.
— Oh, you are to come backwards to me when you bring the eraser.

c. After each interruption, ask teams to begin again.

d. Stop to review problems with the children. Note that they had difficulties because of the way that the rules were given. Lack of agreement about the rules and constant change of direction lead to confusion.

e. Write "A rule should be easy to follow," on the board. Work with the group to develop a clear set of rules for the Eraser Game. List the children's suggestions, then vote to select a few simple rules for the game.

f. Play the game again to demonstrate that clear rules and directions make for a good experience while playing together.

Creating Our Own Constitution

Focus on the Constitution

A constitution that is made by the people and for the people works if the people take responsibility for making a good constitution and keeping it working.

The Setting

These strategies are designed to transform a set of simple group rules that the children have developed into a constitution. Only through a process such as this are children likely to have a sense of what is involved in constitution making in the adult world. Through these strategies the children begin to understand both the concept of constitution and what went into the making of the U.S. Constitution whose bicentennial we commemorate in 1987.

It is important to note that the children's experience in drawing up their "constitution" does not exactly parallel the adult democratic experience. The developmental level of the children and the special responsibility of the adult leader/teacher for the children in his/her charge means that the adult's "vote" outweighs the child's. The adult is not asked to abdicate his/her authority but, rather, is asked to wield it rationally and openly.

Laura Stein and first graders, Alexandria, VA Public Schools. Alexandria Journal and Globe.

Getting Started

1. Call the children's attention to their list of rules (which should be posted on the wall). Ask: "Who made these rules?" The response should be to the effect that "we all did." Reflect on how hard they all worked at making a good list of rules. Discuss any disagreements that arose and ways that they were resolved. Establish the idea that each member of the group is an important part of the community with the right to be recognized and have his/her ideas respected.

2. Spend some time reviewing the list of rules and the tests for rules. Since the list was made, has anyone found something that might be reconsidered or changed? Does anyone feel that other rules should be added?

3. Discuss what these rules do for the group. What is their purpose? Draw out from the children that some of the rules are meant to help keep us safe and healthy, some rules protect our property, and some rules help us to get along together. Finally, discuss the purposes of the group and how the rules of a group should help achieve those purposes.

For example, one of the major purposes of a community group may be to reach a goal through teamwork so the rules should help the group work together. A major purpose of a classroom group is to learn, so the rules should help create an environment in which children can learn.

4. Spend as much time as necessary to review the rules to see if they do help achieve the purposes of the group. Here may be the best time to introduce the role of the responsible adult to work with them to be certain that their rules are fair and achieve the purposes of the group.

As an adult leader/teacher you have experience, expertise that the children do not possess and an obligation to review these rules. Identify any rules that you do not believe should be here, explain your reasons, and explain why you are dropping the rule. By handling this review sensitively, the children will not feel threatened and only more secure in knowing that you have taken such care for their welfare. (Note, depending on how closely you have been working with and monitoring the process, you may not find any needed deletions or changes.)

Working With the Ideas

1. Note that since the children have so carefully thought about the rules for the group it would be a good idea to turn this list of rules into a formal document or constitution. Introduce the concept of "constitution", i.e., "A constitution is a set of rules by which people agree to live."

2. Reflect on the fact that a constitution contains the most important rules for a group. Check your list of rules once again. If it is a particularly long list, you may wish to help the children pare it down by dropping out the less important rules or rules that may be subsumed under other rules. Depending upon the ages of the children their "constitution" may well contain no more than 10 to 15 rules. (Take care to stress that

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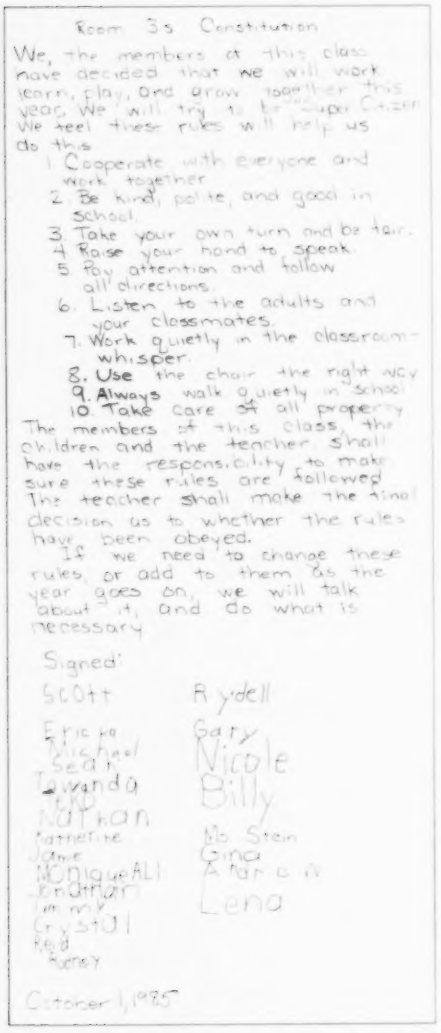


Room 3s Constitution

We, the members of this class have decided that we will work learn, play, and grow together this year. We will try to be "Super Citizen" We feel these rules will help us do this

1. Cooperate with everyone and work together.
2. Be kind, polite, and good in school.
3. Take your own turn and be fair.
4. Raise your hand to speak.
5. Pay attention and follow all directions.
6. Listen to the adults and your classmates.
7. Work quietly in the classroom- whisper.
8. Use the chair the right way
9. Always walk quietly in school
10. Take care of all property

The members of this class, the children and the teacher shall have the responsibility to make sure these rules are followed. The teacher shall make the final decision as to whether the rules have been obeyed.

If we need to change these rules, or add to them as the year goes on, we will talk about it, and do what is necessary

Signed:

Scott
Ryidell
Eric
Gary
Michael
Nicole
Sean
Billy
Ivanda
Ted
Nathan
Ms Stein
Katherine
Gina
Jamie
Monique ALI
Amar a n
Jonathan
Lena
Jimmy
Crystal
Ked
Audrey

October 1, 1985

while some rules may not appear in the constitution, there may still be rules that are important to follow.)

3. Note that since these rules will form the basis for their constitution it is very important that a majority of the members of the group accepts each rule. (Very young children will need to be introduced to the concept of voting and majority rule.) Have the students vote on each rule individually. A majority vote means that the rule will be part of the new constitution. Give your own affirmation of each rule after the vote is taken.

4. Post a new list with each of the rules that the children have accepted as part of their constitution. Be sure that the rules continue to be expressed in language suggested by the children.

You may wish to discuss with the children the order in which the rules should be listed. Some possibilities include listing by order of importance, putting rules about similar things together, putting rules about health and safety before rules about property, . . .

5. Write the word "preamble" on the board with the following definition: "an introductory part of a constitution that states the reasons for and intent of the law." Review this definition. Remind children of their earlier discussion (see "Getting Started" #'s 2 and 3 above) regarding the purposes of the rules. Work with the children to incorporate these reasons into a preamble for their constitution. One elementary classroom drew up this preamble for their constitution . . .

Preamble: "We the students in Mrs. R's class, in order to live in harmony, learn well, stay healthy, and enjoy each day together, have made these rules . . .

6. Make a copy of the constitution (with the children's preamble and rules) on a large sheet of paper that can be posed. Tell the children that everyone — *including you* — will now sign the constitution that you have drawn up together. Each person's signature will signify that he or she agrees to live by this constitution.

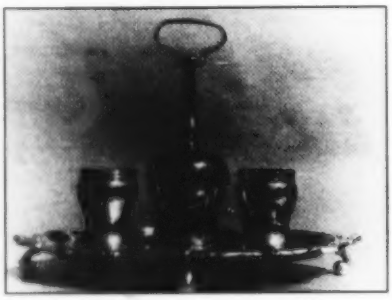
You may wish to make this a rather solemn, formal ceremony to signify the importance of the occasion. Have someone take pictures of the signing which can be posted with the constitution and which will facilitate further comparison with the U.S. Constitution.

7. Display the constitution prominently so that children can refer to the rules easily each time the group meets or each day in the classroom. Post the photographs of the signing with the document.

8. Provide a copy of the constitution for each person to keep and one to take home. (Send a note home for parents to promote awareness of the process, to encourage discussion of the ideas, and suggest follow-up in the home setting.)

9. Make a bulletin board entitled "Living Under Our Constitution." Throughout the year take pictures of the children following the rules they have made. Post the pictures along with the appropriate rule on the bulletin board.

This activity is based in part on a unit from Laura E. Stein, Maury Elementary School, Alexandria, Virginia.



Signing the Constitution

Making Old-Fashioned Ink

Make some old-fashioned ink with your students — similar to the ink used, perhaps, to write and sign the Constitution of the United States. Let the children use it with feathers (quills as they are called) to practice writing their names. Then they can all take turns signing their classroom constitution with a quill and old-fashioned ink.

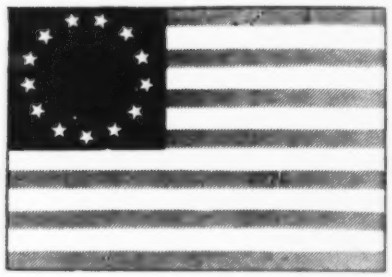
1 tsp. tannic acid, small plastic cups, 1 tsp. iron sulfate, toothpicks, pens, quills or fountain pens.

Have each child dissolve ¼ tsp. tannic acid in 1 tsp. water. Then dissolve ¼ tsp. iron sulfate in 1 tsp. water. Note the color of each solution. Now pour the two together. The new substance is old-fashioned ink.

It Is Written

Focus on the Constitution

Two hundred years ago people representing citizens from each of the 13 original states wrote the Constitution, which is still the basic law for the United States.



The Setting

This activity uses the Constitution itself and the setting in which it was forged to give children a sense of rule-making long ago in Philadelphia. The activities relate that important historical period to our time and to their own lives.

Allow three sessions for this activity involving informal group discussions.

Getting Started

1. Display a "parchment" facsimile of the original U.S. Constitution signed in 1787 on a bulletin board. Leave another one (along with a modern copy including the changes in text and the amendments) on a counter for a closer look.

2. Post pictures of the signers at the Constitutional Convention and of Independence Hall. (See illustrations in this handbook.)

3. Carefully note any questions or observations and use them later to start your discussion on the Constitution.

Working with the Ideas

1. Tell the story of the convention, which started in May and lasted through the summer until the signing in September. (Refer to background reading in this book.) Look at a picture of Independence Hall and talk about the building.

2. Look at a facsimile of the U.S. Constitution signed in 1787, noting its structure, which includes a preamble, articles, and signatures.

3. Refer to the constitution produced by the group. Hold it up or post it beside the U.S. Constitution. Recall the process of deciding on rules and signing the document.

4. Show a modern copy of the Constiution and point out to the children that the Constitution has been changed and amended.

5. Use a copy of a painting of the signing of the Constitution. Point out some of the familiar faces in the painting, e.g., Benjamin Franklin and George Washington. (You may want to show larger portraits of famous leaders, if available.) If you have taken photographs of the children signing their constitution, draw parallels between the children and the signers of the U.S. Constitution.

Benjamin Franklin

6. Use a large map of the United States to show which states sent delegates to Philadelphia. Have children color in the original thirteen states on desk copies of the map.

7. Discuss travel and communication at that time. Show the distance from your community to Philadelphia and compare the time it takes to get there today with an estimate of how long it took in 1787. (Thirty miles a day by coach or on horseback.)

This activity is taken in part from a unit in: *Elementary Legal Framework*, by Ron Cold, LEGAL/ELF Projects, Dade County, Florida.

A Fundamental Freedom

Focus on the Constitution

The original Constitution has been expanded to include a Bill of Rights and other amendments which protect individual rights and freedoms.

The Setting

This section will focus on freedom of speech and includes strategies involving a real case that went to the Supreme Court. The activity is intended to help students:

- identify why freedom of speech is important in a democracy;
- see how life would be different without it;
- recognize that there are limits on freedom of speech and that this freedom demands responsibility;
- realize that no set of rules, no constitution, can cover every situation that comes up;
- introduce the concept of judicial interpretation of the Constitution;
- understand that people often disagree about what the Constitution says and how it applies to specific situations.

Getting Started

1. Briefly review the three branches of the federal government. Describe the Supreme Court and its function as the highest federal court of appeal.

2. Then review the Bill of Rights and its role in guaranteeing certain freedoms. Focus in on the First Amendment and freedom of speech.

3. Have each child make a list of how his or her life might be different if there was no freedom of speech. For example, their favorite TV show might be cancelled because someone in the government didn't like it. Share the answers with the class and briefly discuss each.

Working with the Ideas

1. The Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution to insure freedoms for the individual in our society. The First Amendment guarantees that we all have freedom of speech. Think about the following situations and decide if you think that there should be a right to say or print these kinds of things:

- lies; things that aren't true;
- demands for new laws to change the way that people act to use our natural resources;
- criticism of government policy in regulating business or foreign policy;
- fighting or threatening words, such as threatening to hurt people if they don't do what you want them to do;
- saying things that people find offensive, such as nasty words

2. Refer to the situations given above, then ask the students if they think that people have the right to say whatever they want all of the time? Why or why not? In what kinds of situations may there be limits on what people can say?

3. Draw a large balance scale and label one side "individual rights" and the other "general welfare." Discuss the fact that in a constitutional democracy individual rights and the safety of all people must be kept in balance.

4. Refer to the situations listed below. Ask the children to think about what might happen if freedom

of speech allowed people to act in the ways described.

- shout fire in a crowded place where there is no fire;
- take out an ad in a local paper and say that a business has terrible products;
- criticize the police or the president in a TV speech;
- send a letter to other people with insulting language;
- send a letter to an editor of a newspaper supporting an unpopular group.

5. Analyze some of the situations with the group to see if the individual's right to free speech interferes with the general welfare. Are they in balance? For instance: Does the individual have the right to shout "fire" in a crowded place when there is no fire? Is there a public good involved . . . the need to protect people from the dangers of a panic in a crowded place?

6. Read (or have students read) "The Public Anger Case". Ask students to think of reasons why Terminiello should be allowed to speak; ask them to consider reasons why he should not.

7. Look at the balance scale again. Ask the children to think of Terminiello's right to speak balanced against the general welfare. Have the children vote on how they sould have decided this case.

8. Be ready to explain the Court's reasoning in ruling in the way they did. Show the children that the Court was not unanimous in this decision and tell them that a dissenting opinion is often written in important cases.

The Public Anger Case

A man named Terminiello is speaking to a large crowd in an auditorium in Chicago. A big crowd has gathered outside because they don't like what he has to say. He makes an angry speech, in which he says bad things about political leaders and about people of other races and religions. There is a lot of pushing and shoving between his supporters and his enemies, and the police are called. The people outside begin to throw bricks and break windows. The police can't control them. Finally, the police arrest Terminiello and charge him for the minor crime of disorderly conduct. They say he used "fighting words" which created the trouble; he says he has a right to free speech. How would you decide?

The Court Speaks:

By a bare 5-4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court, the most important court in the country, said that the First Amendment gave Terminiello the right to speak. Justice Douglas, writing for the majority, said that "Freedom of speech, though not absolute . . . is nevertheless protected against censorship or punishment, unless shown likely to produce a clear and present danger of a serious substantive evil that rises far above public inconvenience, annoyance, or unrest."

The judges who disagreed talked about "society's need for public order . . . No serious outbreak of mob violence, race rioting, lynching or public disorder is likely to get going without the help of some speech-making to some mass of people . . . (the speaker cannot be allowed to) provoke violence . . ."

Terminiello v. Chicago, 337 U.S. 1 (1949)

These activities are based in part on a strategy called *Freedom of Speech/Grades 4-6* by Dale Greenawald, published in *Update*, Winter, 1986.

Focus on the Constitution

Through the past two hundred years the Constitution has served as the basis for government. It has influenced the lives of Americans and created institutions based on principles of freedom and democracy.

The Setting

The Constitution provides a focal point for a school, group, and/or community-wide commemoration of the basic values in American society. the purpose of these efforts is to create a sense of community that captures the spirit of our participatory form of government.

Activities

1. Write the mayor/governor to request the declaration of a "Constitution Month."

2. Identify a theme/topic for "Constitution Month." Below are a few possibilities that can provide a base for activities that allow a broad-based audience to learn about the Constitution through a variety of participatory activities.

   Why a Constitution?

   How Does a Vote Count?

   Speaking Your Mind in America

   Equality Under Our Constitution

   How the Founders' Ideas Touch Us Today

3. Publish a weekly column in the local/school newspaper or organization newsletter that highlights a constitutional issue/topic or reflects the "Constitution Month" theme.

4. Distribute weekly bulletins, flyers, or handbills on:

   rights and responsibilities found in the Constitution;
   quick sketches of the men who went to the Convention from each state.

5. Create a poster for display in public buildings detailing community plans for commemorating the Constitution.

6. Develop a poster or picture exhibit on the Constitution in the library, entrance hall, or cafeteria. (i.e., Poster exhibit: "Blessings of Liberty," available from Project '87)

7. Conduct an in-service session for school/district staff and others working with youth focusing on the Constitution with an interesting film and information on teaching strategies.

8. Have a special Constitution book fair and library exhibit featuring materials on the bicentennial. Offer posters, biographies, history books, and stories that will make the period come alive. (Some useful materials for these activities are listed in the resource section.)

9. Have the children's librarian prepare a Constitution exhibit of history books, biographies, stories, poetry, picture books, and music relating to the Constitution. Plan story hours to read some of the most interesting books. See suggestions in the resource section at the end of this guide.

10. Develop a "Historymobile" exhibit to take to schools, libraries, parks, and other public places in your town, city or country. (Sometimes the library district operates a bookmobile that can be adapted to teach about the Constitution for a week or month.)

- Choose a theme that will show the meaning of the Constitution. (i.e., Why the Constitution Was Written, Who Makes Our Laws?, How Does Our Constitution Change?)
- Fit the "Historymobile" with replicas of the Constitution and other documents.
- Display books, posters, dioramas, and large drawings of life in the 1780's.
- Plan to have an interactive game, worksheet, and/or brochure that highlights the theme and explains the display.
- Ask students to be guides to explain the "Historymobile" to other students or to the public.

11. Hold a constitutional convention where rules are drawn up using procedures similar to those outlined in the first two experiences in this book. Provide an opportunity for children to vote to "ratify" the constitution.

12. Display a large copy of the children's constitution in a prominent place. Link the rules in it to pictures showing the rules used correctly. (The children can make drawings and sign them or you can use photographs of the children in action.)

13. Get the local newspaper to print children's writing on the Constitution. Ask the editor to publish a special column or supplement for children on the Constitution.

14. Enter a float in the local parades on holidays depicting the Constitutional Convention or a constitutional theme. The float can show a facsimile of the Constitution with a quill pen. Have children impersonate some of the famous people of the time like Martha and George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and James Madison.

15. Hold a *Children's Constitution Day* at the local community center, library, or park. (Scout troops, historical societies, and other groups can help to organize this event.)

- Organize a parade or fashion show where children dress up to portray delegates to the Convention, their wives, and people of the times. Have children read selections from the diaries of people like Madison, Benjamin Franklin, and Abigail Adams.
- Have a children's art show focusing on historical pictures, cartoons on constitutional issues, and pictures about what the Constitution means today.
- Show a few short and interesting films continuously on people and events relating to the Constitution.

16. Have children make a large collage or mural about the Constitution to hang in city hall, in the library, or another prominent place in town. The art work could depict the signing of the Constitution, freedoms that it provides, or people participating in government.

Background on the Creation of The Constitution
About The People and The Times

Before the Constitutional Convention Met

Our Constitution calls for a Congress representing the people of a free nation. Yet even before we were a nation, the First Continental Congress gathered in Philadelphia, in 1774, to ask for certain rights from Britain. This colonial Congress wrote a bill of rights protesting the "Intolerable Acts" passed by Parliament. The delegates demanded "life, liberty, and property" and stated the right to govern themselves free of the English Parliament, subject only to the King's veto except in foreign trade matters.

The Second Continental Congress met in May, 1775, after the fighting had begun at Lexington and Concord. From then on the ties to Britain were quickly broken. The idea of independence took hold. By the time the colonies signed the Declaration of Independence in July, 1776, many were already drafting their own state constitutions. Rhode Island and Connecticut continued to live by their colonial charters. These colonial charters and state constitutions became models for the new U.S. Constitution.

Each of these state constitutions contained a bill of rights and most called for a two-house legislature. Each set up a system of state courts.

James Madison

George Washington's chair in Independence Hall, Constitutional Convention 1787.

The Articles of Confederation

The new nation needed some governing body to coordinate the war and to promote cooperation among the thirteen new governments. By July, 1777, the Continental Congress had drafted a written working agreement. When the Articles of Confederation were finally ratified in March, 1781, they allowed for a loose alliance of states. There was a one-house Congress presided over by a President. Each state had one vote. There was no judiciary and no executive branch. This Congress was empowered to:

> make war and peace, send and receive ambassadors; enter into treaties and alliances; coin money (as were the states); regulate Indian affairs; and establish a post office.

For the next few years the states struggled to live by the Articles of Confederation, but distances between states were great, communication was very limited in those days, and border conflicts grew in many places. Cooperation was strained as each of the thirteen turned attention to its own needs and problems.

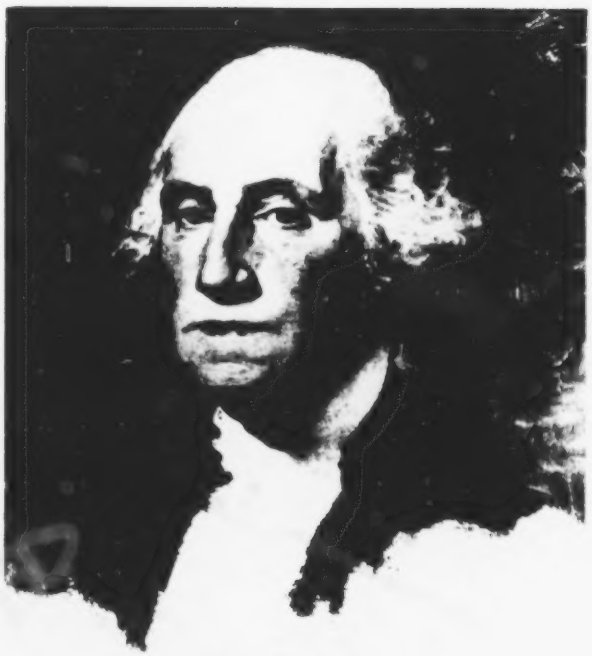
The Articles of Confederation were very weak, since they declared only certain powers, and Congress could not easily pass more. Amendments had to be passed by nine votes in Congress, then ratified by all thirteen states. Change was nearly impossible. The Congress had no power to tax the people or the states or to regulate trade. There were no national courts. Congress was left to talk. It could take little action of any kind.

Moving Toward a Constitutional Convention

From the start, a few voices began to speak up for a better agreement. Many criticized the Congress for its lack of action. Others feared rebellion as groups protested the inability of the new government to meet its obligations. At Newburgh, New York, army officers gathered to complain of delayed pay, pensions, and allowances for food and clothing. Enlisted men demanding back pay stormed the State House in Philadelphia where Congress was meeting and forced them to flee to Princeton, New Jersey. Debt-ridden farmers in Massachusetts, led by Daniel Shays, marched on Boston to try to force the state to change its hard money policy. They were finally put down by the Massachusetts militia. State leaders began to realize that a more effective national government was urgently needed.

Alexander Hamilton had been speaking and writing on that subject for some time. James Madison had been working to gather a few states to talk about reforms. Gradually, with a meeting in Mount Vernon in 1785 on trade and a gathering at Annapolis in 1786, momentum for revising the Articles built up. Madison, Hamilton, and others worked closely together at Annapolis. The small group there produced an agreement to petition the Continental Congress to convene a meeting. Congress agreed and a date was set for such a gathering on the second Monday in May, 1787, to revise the Articles of Confederation.

Alexander Hamilton



George Washington

The Constitutional Convention

Twelve states sent fifty-five delegates to Philadelphia in May. Rhode Island never sent a representative and was the last to ratify the Constitution after it was drafted. The delegates met in closed secret session. Diaries kept that summer and Madison's private notes, published after his death in 1840, give us details of the debates and compromises that fashioned our Constitution.

With George Washington presiding, the delegates reached a "Great Compromise" on representation that was the basis for a union of the states. The House was to have one representative for each 30,000 people in the state, counting three-fifths of the slaves. In the Senate, each state was to have an equal vote.

During August committees worked on the details and style of the document and the Convention met to settle some issues. By September 17th the Constitution was ready for signatures. Only thirty-nine delegates signed. The summer of 1787 ended with great parades and celebrations for the new and stronger government. Other Americans were not pleased and resolved to oppose the Constitution. Months of debate followed between Federalists and Anti-Federalists, ending with the ratification of the Constitution in 1788.

On March 4, 1789, the old Congress put the new Constitution in effect and on April 30, 1789, George Washington was inaugurated in New York as the first President of the United States.

A Guide to the Constitution

Preamble

We The People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article I

The Legislative Branch: Congress is organized and the powers and restraints concerning both houses are specified.

Article II

The Executive Branch: The office of President is set up and its powers, restraints, duties, and manner of election are stated.

Article III

The Judicial Branch: The judicial power of the United States and the restraints on such power are defined. Treason is also defined.

Article IV

The States: The power of the states is determined as well as the relation of the states and territories to the federal government.

Article V

12

The method of amending the Constitution is prescribed and the guarantee of equal representation of states in the United States Senate is given.

Article VI

The supremacy of the Constitution over state law, federal laws, and treaties is stated. A requirement is made that all national and state officials must pledge to uphold the Constitution, although no religious test can be required.

Article VII

The method for ratification of the Constitution by the states is given.

Amendments *(with year of ratification)*

I	Religious and political expression (1791)
II	Right to keep and bear arms (1791)
III	Unlawful quartering of soldiers in peace and war forbidden (1791)
IV	Unreasonable searches and seizures forbidden (1791)
V	Rights of persons accused of crimes (1791)
VI	Protection in criminal trials (1791)
VII	Jury trial in civil cases (1791)
VIII	Excessive bail or cruel and unusual punishment forbidden (1791)
IX	People's rights retained (1791)
X	Powers reserved to the states and to the people (1791)
XI	Suits against a state (1798)
XII	Procedure for election of President and Vice President (1804)
XIII	Slavery abolished (1865)
XIV	Rights of citizens, apportionment of representatives in Congress; guarantee of due process of law and equal protection of the laws (1868)
XV	The right to vote for former slaves (1870)
XVI	Income taxes (1913)
XVII	Direct election of senators (1913)
XVIII	Prohibition of intoxicating liquors (1919)
XIX	Women's right to vote (1920)
XX	Presidential and congressional terms of office (1933)
XXI	Repeal of the Eighteenth ("Prohibition") Amendment (1933)
XXII	Two-term limit for Presidents (1951)
XXIII	Provision of electors for the District of Columbia (1961)
XXIV	Abolition of the poll tax as voting requirement (1964)
XXV	Presidential disability and succession to office (1967)
XXVI	Voting age lowered to eighteen (1971)

Adapted from American Government in the Twentieth Century, Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett, General Learning Corporation. 1973.

Resources for Teaching About the United States Constitution in the Elementary Grades

The World Book Encyclopedia

This resource has an article on the Constitution which serves as an excellent introduction and overview for students. It includes a copy of the entire Constitution and has an index which will help readers find references to specific subjects covered in the document. The article also lists additional resources and questions for discussion. For a free reprint of the World Book article, write to World Book, Inc., Merchandise Mart Plaza, Station 99, Chicago, IL 60654, or contact your World Book representative (look in the yellow pages under "Encyclopedias").

The resources listed here represent a small portion of the materials currently available. Teachers, project leaders, and students will want to use the many basic texts and references available on the Constitution.

For Teachers and Project Leaders

American Bar Association

Salute to the Constitution. 1985-1987. *Newsletter, published three times a year, with current information for educators and project leaders on bicentennial activities and resources for young people. Free upon request.* **Grades K-12.**

Update on Law-Related Education. *Magazine, published three times a year; a 10 issue constitution packet is available. Current issues focus on ideas and teaching strategies on the Constitution.* **Grades 5-12.** *$14.50 for ten-issue packet: PC#738-0100. $9.50 for subscription (3 issues each year): PC#738-2000. Order from ABA Order Fulfillment, noting PC numbers, 750 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611.*

We the People — A Program Planning Guide. 1986. *This guide provides instructions on how to organize for community activities: building coalitions, fundraising, publicity, working with the media and the schools. Includes a bibliography of written and audiovisual materials on constitutional topics. $5. Make checks payable to the ABA. Order from the Commission on Public Understanding About the Law at the address listed above.*

American Bar Foundation

Sources of Our Liberties — Documentary Origins of Individual Liberties in the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights. edited by Richard L. Perry. Revised edition, 1978. *Single volume containing English and American documents constituting the major legal sources of our individual liberties. Starting with the Magna Carta and ending with the Bill of Rights. Commentary and the text for each are included. Basic resource for teachers and secondary students. $7.50 plus $2.50 postage and handling charge.*

American Bar Foundation, American Bar Center, 750 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611.

Fairfax County Public Schools

The Constitution and the Early Republic — Teacher's Guide and Resource Handbook. *A fifth-grade unit in which students focus on the years from 1783-1815 in American history. This nine-week unit takes a humanities approach which integrates the study of literature, art, architecture, music, and ideas of the period with the political, social and economic history of the times. This curriculum document was drafted, tested, and revised in the Fairfax County Public Schools. Write for an order form.* **Grade 5.** *$15.*

Fairfax County Public Schools, Department of Instructional Services, the Donald Lacey Instructional Center, 3705 Crest Drive, Annandale, VA 22003.

National Archives

A More Perfect Union: The Creation of the United States Constitution. *In narrative form, this booklet chronicles the exciting events in Philadelphia in 1787 that led up to the Constitution of the United States. Contains full text and photographs of the original document. #216 $2.50.*

The Formation of the Union: A Documentary History. *This booklet relates the story of the period from 1774 to 1791 when the original 13 colonies joined together to form an independent nation. Focus is on major events from the first Continental Congress through the adoption of the Bill of Rights. (Illustrated with photographs of 38 original documents.) #260 $2.50.*

Posters:

Declaration of Independence 34 × 43 inches #6302 $2

Constitution of the United States 31 × 38 inches #6301 $2

Bill of Rights 31 × 33 inches #6303 $2

Charters of Freedom: *Booklet on the documents listed above. #202 $1*

Ask for a listing of all their constitutional materials, which include: books, facsimiles and reprinted texts of the Constitution and major documents, calendars, microfilm publications and guides of federal records (including the Records of the Constitutional Convention of 1787. One

roll, M866, $20). Minimum order, $5. For orders up to $10 add $1.50 for handling; for orders from $10 up to $50 add $3.

National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C. 20408.

Project '87
(A joint undertaking of the American Historical Association and the American Political Science Association)

"The Blessings of Liberty" — An Exhibit for the Bicentennial of the Constitution. Project '87, 1986. *Twelve full color poster panels, 22" × 36", on the framing of the United States Constitution. Three posters are designed for each of the following categories:* ***Leading Up to the Constitution, The Creation of the Constitution,*** *and* ***The Enduring Constitution.*** *Teachers' guide provided. $70 per exhibit, including postage, $100 per mounted, free-standing exhibit, including postage.*

Project '87, 1527 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Television — Report by Action for Children's Television
Television, Children and the Constitutional Bicentennial, edited by Peggy Charren and Carol Hulsizer. Cambridge, MA; Action for Children's Television. 1986. *Edited material from a symposium on programming opportunities for the 1987 Constitutional Bicentennial. There are listings of planned programs, organizations to contact, and resources. The guide to books and films contains many items that can be used in the elementary school. $10.*

Action for Children's Television, 20 University Road, Cambridge, MA 02138.

The Taft Institute
Constitutional Government in the American Setting, by Richard H. Leach. Washington, DC: The Taft Institute. 1985. *Description of the American constitutional system and its philosophical background, includes pullout Constitution and timeline. Designed for teachers.* **Grades 5-12** *$6 plus $1.50 for postage and handling.*

The Taft Institute for Two-Party Government, 420 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10170.

Background Reading on the Constitution

This is a selected list of titles. Your school or local library will have more biographies and histories relating to historical sources, the Constitution, the founders, and the period.

Bowen, Catherine Drinker. ***Miracle in Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention, May to September 1787.*** Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986. (8 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116.) *Reissue of a readable narrative of the creation of the Constitution.*

Currie, David P., Joyce Stevos, John Patrick, and Richard Remy. ***The Constitution,*** Scott Foresman, 1985. (1900 East Lake Avenue, Glenview, IL 60025.) *Useful study book for grades 7-12 on the Constitution with background information, constitutional annotations and glossary. Teacher's handbook includes lesson plans, seven Project '87 lessons, supplemental activities, and a Constitution test.*

Farrand, Max. ***The Framing of the Constitution of the United States.*** New Haven: Yale University Press, 1913. (302 Temple Street, New Haven, CT 06520.) *Short classic account of the Constitutional Convention taken from Madison's notes and other sources.*

Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay. ***The Federalist Papers,*** ed. with an introduction by Clinton Rossiter. New York: New American Library, 1961. (1633 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.) *The important original arguments for the ratification of the Constitution, published anonymously as "letters" to the public by the authors starting in October, 1787.*

Lockwood, Alan L. and Harris, David E. ***Reasoning with Democratic Values: Ethical Problems in United States History.*** Teachers College Press, 1985. (1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10027.) *Readings on historical events with ethical dilemmas relating to democratic values. Teacher's manual.*

Morris, Richard B. ***Witnesses at the Creation: Hamilton, Madison, Jay and the Constitution.*** New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985. (383 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017.) *A description of how the Federalist Papers were written and used to promote ratification of the Constitution, for secondary school students.*

Rodell, Fred. ***55 Men: The Story of the Constitution.*** Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1986. (P.O. Box 1831, Harrisburg, PA 17108.) *Reissue of a readable account of the men who attended the Constitutional Convention written for the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution.*

Storing, Herbert J., ***What the Antifederalists were FOR.*** Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984. (5001 S. Ellis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637.) *An introduction to the political thought of the opponents of the Constitution. For upper level high school students.*

Books for Students

This list highlights a few titles. Note that libraries and book stores contain many more stories, biographies, and historical resources relating to the Constitution and American government.

Students will gain from having a diverse collection of materials to examine in the classroom. Try to include: books on the history of the Constitution, biographies of convention delegates and people of the times, information on judicial review, and discussions of contemporary issues.

Fink, Sam. Illustrator and inscriber for: ***The Constitution of the United States of America.*** New York: Random House, 1986. (201 E. 50 St., New York, N.Y. 10022.) *A large artistic volume containing the complete Constitution, designed and published to honor the two-hundredth anniversary of the Constitution. Imaginative, pictures illustrate each article and amendment of the Constitution on separate pages. A pictorial version of the Constitution that makes it easy to view it as a document with distinct provisions.*

Fritz, Jean. ***What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?, Where Was Patrick Henry on the 29th of May?, Why Don't You Get a Horse, Sam Adams?, Will You Sign Here, John Hancock?*** New York: Coward, McCann Inc., 1974-76. (51 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10010.) *Four books on well-known Americans that focus on their personal qualities and the background of events in their time. Stories and descriptions make historical figures come alive for younger children.*

Hilton, Suzanne. ***We the People: The Way We Were 1783-1793.*** Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981. (925 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.) *Surveys the way that people lived during the first ten years of independence.*

Morris, Richard B. ***The American Revolution, The Constitution, The Founding of the Republic, The Indian Wars,*** and ***The War of 1812.*** Minneapolis: Lerner Publication Company, 1986. (241 First Avenue North, Minneapolis, MN 55401.) *Five history books for young people, grades 4-8, dealing with the founding period. The volume on the Constitution contains a simplified version of the document and complete background information at a reading level suitable for the middle grades and junior high school.*

For more information on resources for teaching about the Constitution contact the American Bar Association, Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship

American Bar Association
750 North Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60611

The Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship acknowledges with sincere appreciation the role of World Book, Inc. in the production of this handbook. All design and printing have been generously contributed by World Book.

World Book, Inc.

Scene at the Signing of the United States Constitution

Signers of the Constitution

Signers included the secretary, William Jackson, and John Dickinson of Delaware, who was absent but had another delegate sign for him.

1. George Washington
2. Benjamin Franklin
3. James Madison, Jr.
4. Alexander Hamilton
5. Gouverneur Morris
6. Robert Morris
7. James Wilson
8. Charles C. Pinckney
9. Charles Pinckney
10. John Rutledge
11. Pierce Butler
12. Roger Sherman
13. William S. Johnson
14. James McHenry
15. George Read
16. Richard Bassett
17. Richard D. Spaight
18. William Blount
19. Hugh Williamson
20. Dan of St. Thomas Jenifer
21. Rufus King
22. Nathaniel Gorham
23. Jonathan Dayton
24. Daniel Carroll
25. William Few
26. Abraham Baldwin
27. John Langdon
28. Nicholas Gilman
29. William Livingston
30. William Paterson
31. Thomas Mifflin
32. George Clymer
33. Thomas FitzSimons
34. Jared Ingersoll
35. Gunning Bedford, Jr.
36. Jacob Broom
37. John Dickinson
38. John Blair
39. David Brearley
40. William Jackson

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